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ENGLAND's
Impenitence under Smiting;
CAUSING
ANGER TO CONTINUE,
AND THE
DESTROYING HAND OF GOD
TO BE STRETCHED FORTH STILL;
SET OUT IN A
SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE THE
HONORABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
AT THEIR
PUBLIC FAST,
SEPTEMBER 25.
1644.

By NICOLAS PROFFET,
Late Rector of Peter's in Marlborough, Minister of Ed-
monton, and one of the Assembly of Divines.

Published by Order from that House.

JER. ix. 12. *Who is the wise man, that may understand this?
and who is he to whom the mouth of the Lord hath spoken,
that he may declare it, for what the land perisheth, &c.*

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2



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P R E F A C E.

THIS valuable Sermon sufficiently recommends itself; and therefore it requires none from me. I shall only observe, that it is well calculated to be of very extensive and lasting benefit to Mankind, while they sojourn here; especially in such awful sinning times as these which are now passing over us, when we have reason to sing both of mercy and of judgment. If the Reader would be persuaded to read this Sermon attentively, and to make a faithful application of it, one great end of the publication of this Edition in Scotland would be gained. It is peculiarly seasonable at this alarming crisis; and it will, I hope, through the blessing of GOD, prove serviceable to some.—
And it is expected, that the candid Reader

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(iii)

will find, and readily acknowledge, that this is a very plain, judicious, and practical Sermon, wherein the subject, God's smiting a sinful people, either by war, or any other judgment, is accurately and well handled. The Author brings in his scripture-proofs with great dexterity and elegance.—It is exactly printed according to the London Copy. And, that it may meet with the success which it deserves, and may be instrumental in opposing the fatal increase of sin, where it shall be dispersed by Divine Providence, and so a mean of turning away the wrath of GOD from the land, is the earnest desire, and hearty wish, of the publisher of this Edition,

JAMES REID.



*To the Honorable House of Commons assembled in
Parliament.*

WHEN I understood you had pleased to design my unworthy self to this weighty service of preaching at your public Fast; although I could not but apprehend it a work far above my abilities, yet might I not think of flying from it like Jonah, or making objections against it with Moses, (Exod. iii. 11. and iv. 10, 13.)—for your power and his Providence, who is higher than the highest, meeting together in this appointment, made it both impossible and unlawful to desert the service. And indeed, these calamitous times that are come upon us, do call upon all men to shew themselves willing, if they have any hope they may be able to do any thing for a perishing Kingdom, to use their best endeavours, with all alacrity, unto that end. That noble resolution of the soldier, so much commended, is most worthy imitation, of whom it is reported, That having lost both arms and legs in services, and having nothing but the trunk of his body remaining to him, yet would needs be in the breach. If (saith he) I can do no other thing, yet perhaps I may keep off a blow, or blunt the edge of some sword drawn to the foiling and wounding of some other; although he had neither hands nor feet, he wanted not an heart to do what he could, and shewed himself willing, when he was able to do little: How mean soever our abilities are, the times will permit none to be silent that are called to speak, nor idle who are called to work. ‘The lion, (saith Amos, chap. iii. 8.) hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophecy?’ I did unfeignedly desire to speak a word in season, and thought no subject more suitable, than what might serve unto that end whereat you aim, which is to divert anger, and prevent utter ruin. I therefore made choice of such a scripture as did discover the cause of our continued miseries, and so did direct unto the cure of this wounded and languishing nation, by removing that cause, the great core is Impenitency under Smiting. *The people turn not to him that smiteth them:* For upon the one hand, there are the divisions of Reuben, causing great and sad thoughts of heart, and on the other, the stupidity and profaneness of the multitude, which causeth great droopings of

spirit. These things do sadden the hearts of the seers and servants of God, and do fill many with fear and doubt, as well as sorrow and grief; seeing how little this last means doth prevail with either party, it is hard to say what sin hath been forsaken of the multitude, since God began to smite the kingdom; as far as I can discern, some sins are rather much increased than at all abated: as, namely, that of drunkenness, a sin so much the more to be lamented, abhorred and restrained, as it is more unseemly in itself, more unsuitable with the present condition of the kingdom, and more unsufferable, where reformation should begin: for it is (I doubt) too true which Chrysost. hath briefly noted of this sin, 'that nothing is a nearer friend to the devil than it, and that it is the fountain and mother of all other vices, that by which the devil drew the Hebrews of old into idolatry, &c. and that which doth make swine of men, and men worse than swine: the sow doth wallow in the mire, and is nourished with dung; but such spread a more abominable table for themselves, thinking upon impure mixtures and wicked loves; yea, they are as men possessed with the devil, and whereas they are the object of our pity, these of our hatred, because they of their own accord bring fury and madness upon themselves: neither is there any more filthy thing than a drunken woman *.' These and such like passages he hath there and elsewhere, with many others of the ancient and latter divines, which I mention, because we live in such times as have far more tolerable thoughts of this sin which is so common among us, and committed openly in the sight of the sun, and not thought to be in the number of those vices which might occasion shame. It were to be wished that inasmuch as no instructions or admonitions will work on such men, the blueness of the wound might be applied, which is a purging medicine for such like evils, (Prov. xx. 30); which while they reign, there will be little hope of any thing tending to a thorough reformation found in such men. Now the way to turn away anger, and to stay the destroying hand, is to cause the people to turn to him that smiteth them. This (most noble and renowned Senators) is that which this wounded and much weakened kingdom calleth for at the hands of her State-Physicians; and being dangerously sick of her wounds,

* Chyrs. Hom. 58. and Matth. xvii. 18.



which seem mortal, if they be not speedily cured, she crieth unto you from all quarters of the land, as the man in the gospel unto Christ in behalf of his son, which had a dumb spirit, that did oft times cast him into the fire and water to destroy him, (Mark ix. 17.—21.) If you can do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us. This is a work worthy your wisest endeavours, if it may be, to become healers of a distressed kingdom, unto which, if this mean piece might contribute the least mite, the unworthy Author should have his end in choosing this text, preaching and publishing this sermon, which is now (although somewhat late) presented to your view; sooner it should have been, but being much mistaken in the time of preaching it, by reason of the silence of the clock, I was constrained when I did perceive I had exceeded much the bounds allotted, to pass over many things, and disrank others, which caused the more labour to place them right, and to supply some of those I did then omit, and transcribe the whole; about which I have spent all the hours that I could ever since spare out of the public attendances, unto which I am tied. I have not made any material addition or alteration, although here and there something was of necessity to be supplied. It is now (such as it is) humbly presented unto your patronage and acceptance, before whom it was preached, and is now published. If any of you should happily cast an eye upon it now printed, as you were pleased to lend an attentive ear unto it when it was preached (and instead of blaming me for mistaking my time, to shew your good acceptance of my weak endeavours) I hope it may be of some use, at least to remind you of that which must steer your course in all your endeavours for the kingdom's safety and church's good; which is to remove the main obstruction, by causing (if it be possible) that the people may turn to him that smiteth, which if it may but in some good measure be effected, we shall not need to fear or doubt the audience of our prayers, and crowning your other endeavours with such success as shall move not only them that now live and pray, but the generations to come, to bless and praise your God and theirs both with and for you; which is constantly begged of God at the throne of his grace, who is exceeding abundantly able to do above all we can ask or think, by the unworthiest of his servants and yours,

N. PROFFET.

8

Die Mercurii, 25th September, 1644.

ORDERED by the Commons assembled in Parliament, That Colonel VEN, Colonel LONG, and Sir ROBERT HARLEY, do from this House, give thanks to Mr PROFFET, for the great pains he took in the Sermon he preached, this day, at the intreaty of the said Commons, at St. Margaret's, Westminster, it being the day of Public Humiliation, and to desire him to print his Sermon. And it is ordered, That none shall presume to print his Sermon without licence under his hand-writing.

H. ELSYNGE, *Cler. Parl. D. Com.*

I do appoint Christopher Meredith to print my Sermon.

NICOLAS PROFFET.

A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED BEFORE THE
HONORABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
AT THEIR
P U B L I C F A S T,
SEPTEMBER 25.
1644.

I S A I A H ix. 13.

— For all this his anger is not turned away, but his
hand is stretched out still:—

For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them,
neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts.

THAT the scope of this verse may be better perceived, it will be necessary to take a short view of the chapter * in which this noble and eloquent prophet, as St Hirome styles him, of whom he further saith, in the same place, *non-tam propheta quam evangelista dicendus sit*: he is rather to be called an evangelist than a prophet; doth notwithstanding here, (as in other places) mingle wine with oil, law with gospel, comminations with consolations. For (as David, Psal. ci.) doth sing, so he doth preach and prophesy mercy and judgment; yet he beginneth with comfort and goes on with terror—from verse 1st unto the 8th he is full of comfort, a son of consolation; but in the rest, *Boanerges*, a son of thunder. In

* Hieron. ad Paul. & Eustach. tom. 3d. p. 26.

that former part of the chapter, he sets himself to comfort (according unto some) the good party of the Israelites, both against former, and future menaces of wrath, judgment and ruin, of which they had heard very heavy burthens before, and were now to hear more and heavier hereafter, such as should not only crush, and bruise, but break, and ruin the state and kingdom. The godly hearing this might quake, faint, and sink if not despair, if some cordial were not first given for their comfort and support.

Or, (as some others think) the prophet doth endeavour hereby to comfort Judah, at this time in a very sad condition, greatly weakened by war; for Israel, that is, the ten tribes had warred against them, and now obtained unto their aid the king of Assyria, who was a potent and mighty prince; by whose help they made no doubt but they should extirpate the royal stock, and wholly subdue Judah, and bring them into perpetual subjection. Now, against them the prophet sets himself, to comfort Judah.

The comfort wherewith he doth endeavour to support them, is drawn out of the well of consolation; (Isa viii. 6.) he giveth them of the water of Shiloah, the promises of the gospel and free grace through Christ. As you may further perceive, by comparing what you here read with Math. iv. 14.

Then, in the 8th verse, the prophet beginneth (as divers interpreters have observed) a new sermon: sure it is, he doth change his voice; for as there he was promising grace, so here he is menacing wrath.

In this part we may observe, how having to do with a secure, proud, pertinacious and incredulous people, that made but little account, and set very light by the menaces of their prophets. He doth first set down the certainty and authority of these comminations, assuring them that they should undoubtedly come to pass, and they should surely feel them. Verse 8.

And howsoever they out of pride and confidence, did seem altogether to slight them, using a proverbial kind of speech which did imply as much, verse 10.; for by it they intimate, that what they lost in overthrows and ruins should be recovered, raised and repaired in greater splendor and

glory than before. Yet they, even all the people, should know that God, who is true of his word, had foretold as much, and should assuredly make it good.

2. As he setteth down the authority, and certainty, so he sets down the time, manner and means, shewing how punishment and ruin should be brought upon them, viz. The Lord would set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together, and then the Syrians before and the Philistines behind, and they should devour Israel with open mouth, ver. 11, 12. *i. e.* Their enemies being enraged should rise up against them on every side, and make a prey of them like wild beasts, rather than reasonable men.

Now, whereas secure and obstinate men are wont to think, it will be but a storm at the most, after which they should have a calm, for being over and God pacified, they should be safe, and free from further fear and punishment; for they having suffered some strokes, usually grow more hard and obstinate than before, and promise themselves greater freedom, and take greater liberty in sin. The prophet therefore lets them know that the Lord hath not shot all his shafts, neither is he pacified, *but his anger doth continue, and his hand is stretched forth still.* In which words he doth represent God unto them in the habit and posture of an angry man, a mighty man that is wroth, who had been smiting heavy strokes; and yet by *his countenance and hand stretched forth still* to strike, doth shew himself notwithstanding the blows already given, to be no less angry than before. Neither are they safe, (as they verily imagine) but still more and heavier strokes hang over their heads, which they shall by no means escape. Now, whereas this might seem strange, that the Lord should be so exceedingly moved against his people, that the cause might be known and God justified in his judgment; the words of the text are added, so as if any make question or desire satisfaction concerning this continuance of his smiting and anger against Israel, he may hereby understand there is cause enough.

For the people turneth not unto him that smiteh them, although they have been grievously smitten, to the end they

might return *and seek the Lord of Hosts*; yet they are so obstinate, and so impenitent and pertinacious, as they will not for all that return, but do more provoke the wrath of God against them.

The word translated (*for*) being *van* in Hebrew, doth properly signify (*and*), but is variously used (and as some grammarians have observed) in well near forty several significations, and sometimes is causal, and doth signify *for*, or *because*.

And in this place the most interpreters take it as causal, and not copulative; and being so taken, you see the words shew the cause why the Lord would not take off his heavy hand, *nor turn away his wrath from Israel*: Namely, because the people were so stubborn and shameless, as they would by no means be brought to repentance and conversion; and therefore it was most just and equal, that the Lord should not give them over, and as it were, give place and way unto them in their wickedness; but as they went on in sinning, so he should go on in smiting them still, till at length they were utterly destroyed.

So that these words are not so much a prediction, as a commination, yea, an accusation, letting them know, that it was most just that the Lord should go on in punishment, because they did still go on in sin; and therefore, howsoever there might be some intermission, yet no dismissal out of *his hand which is stretched out still*. The words are considerable by themselves, and in their relation unto what went before. In themselves they contain a heavy indictment against Israel, in which this heinous crime is charged upon them, that they were grown so obstinate, as they could neither be drawn by mercies, nor driven by judgments, *to turn and seek the Lord of Hosts*, from whom they had turned away by their sins, such was their impenitency and obstinacy, that their minds and hearts in their apostacy so alienated from God, as though they had been smitten with heavy and very grievous strokes, and their misery such as they could neither avoid nor endure; yet they would not take notice of God's hand, so as to turn from their sin, no nor so much as *seek the Lord of Hosts*, and crave pardon and seek help at his hand. For this last

branch seemeth to be a further aggravation of their obstinacy, intimating that they were so far from repentance and conversion, as that *they did not so much as seek unto the Lord of Hosts that smote them*. Now in their relative consideration, they set forth how just it is with God to go on still to be angry, and still to stretch forth his punishing hand, not ceasing to smite till ruin and utter desolation come upon them.

In the words, there are these particulars especially considerable:—

1. Who smote Israel, noted in the relative (*him*) and expressed in the last branch of the text, *the Lord of Hosts*.
2. Why and to what end he smote them, both implied in the word *turn*; they were smitten, because they had turned from him, and that they might be brought to turn again unto him.
3. What use they made of this smiting, what fruit it had among them—and that was as little as might be; for they turned not to him, &c.—this smiting to them was fruitless and vain.
4. How ill it was taken, and what hurt this obstinacy and impenitency of theirs did procure unto them; and that is not only the reproof of the prophet, but the continuance of the anger of God, and the stretching forth of his hand still to strike them with more and much heavier strokes. *For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still*:—So that these words (if they should be largely handled) might furnish our observations with at least these six several doctrines, as implied or expressed in the words.

First, *That the eternal God is the Lord of Hosts*.

Secondly, *That Israel smitten by their enemies in war, it is the Lord that smiteth them*.

Thirdly, *The cause of the destroying sword among them was, their departing from the Lord by their sin*.

Fourthly, *The end of smiting was, that they might return and seek the Lord of Hosts*.

Fifthly, *Israel was obstinate and impenitent, so as they did refuse to return and seek the Lord*.

Sixthly, *This obstinacy and impenitency did greatly provoke the Lord to anger, and was the cause of the continuance of his anger, and stretching forth his hand to smite them still.*

But because it will be impossible to speak of more than the one half of these doctrines within the compass of the time, I shall reduce them unto these three conclusions, and only touch upon some of the other, as occasion shall serve, in some of the uses; and because that which is here spoken of Israel, doth also belong unto any other people, whose case may be paralleled with theirs, I shall propound and handle these doctrines rather in *thesi* than *hypothesi*, thus:—

First, That Israel, or any people in covenant, smitten with the sword of an enemy, it is the Lord that smiteth them.

Secondly, It is an heinous and grievous provoking sin, for a people when they are thus smitten, not to turn and seek the Lord of Hosts.

Thirdly, That Israel, or any people, continuing thus obstinate and impenitent, is the cause of the continuance of God's anger, and the increase of their punishment.

These are the doctrines which (as I conceive) will be most suitable and useful; and therefore of them, as time shall give leave, and God shall assist. And first, I begin with

Doctrine First. When Israel or any people are smitten by their enemies in war, it is the Lord that smiteth them.

When a people is smitten with the sword of a foreign, or domestic enemy, it is the Lord that smiteth them.

The doctrine will be of use, especially for way unto the rest. Something must therefore be spoken of it; although we shall be more brief in this, and more large in the rest. Now this first doctrine, for the sense of it, I suppose it is so clear to every one of ordinary capacity, as I shall not need to spend time in explication.

And for the ground, it will be no less evident unto any that shall observe unto what the relative (*him*) doth refer.

Unto their enemies it cannot be referred, who were mentioned in the former verse, but unto Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts; as the words following do declare.

But to clear this point from some other scriptures, Ezek. vii. 9. 'Ye shall know that I am the Lord that smiteth';—whatsoever the rod or sword may be, the Lord will have it known that he smiteth.

And more particularly and plainly, Deut. xxviii. 25. 'The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies, &c.'—and verse 49. 'The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, &c.' If they be smitten, the Lord is he that doth cause it, and he doth bring their enemies how far soever they come. Ezek. xi. 8. 'Ye have feared the sword, and I will bring a sword upon you, saith the Lord God.' Amos iv. 10. 'Your young men have I slain with the sword, &c.' Ezek. xiv. 17. 'Or if I bring a sword upon that land, and say, Sword, go through the land, so that I cut off man and beast from it.'

These scriptures do clear the point. Yet for better satisfaction unto such as do not see how God should be said to strike them that are smitten by men, we shall briefly note how, and in what sense and respect the Lord is said to smite. God is pleased to work sometimes with, and sometimes without means, mediately and immediately; and thus immediately and without means, he formed our first parents, and upheld them being created; and he led his apostles unto all truth. And in things belonging to this life, he sometimes worketh with, and sometimes without, yea, above and contrary unto secondary causes and means. Thus he fed his people in the wilderness—divided the sea—drew water out of the rock.

Sometimes he worketh by means mediately, and useth second causes; yet then he hath a special hand in these means:—Acts xvii. 28. 'For in him we live, and move, and have our being, &c.' Eph. i. 11. 'He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.' God is not to be conceived in his working by means as men. Kings and princes govern their kingdoms by their officers, so as themselves many times neither act with them, nor do know what is done by them. But the Lord hath an eye and hand in the whole government: All creatures, and every second cause,

are ordered and disposed by him—who is therefore called the Lord of Hosts, not only because all creatures in heaven and earth are his soldiers and his great army, but also, because of his special command, order, and government of them all, and particularly of men in point of war, which is his sword, and is so ordered by him, as he may well be said to smite them that are smitten. In these and the like respects—

First, Because when a sword is drawn upon any people, he doth call for it. Jer. xxv. 29. ‘ For I will call for a sword upon the inhabitants of the earth. Isa. xiii. 4. ‘ He is said to be the Lord of Hosts, who doth muster the host of the battle.

Secondly, He doth send it whithersoever it doth at any time come, Ezek. xiv. 17.

Thirdly, He doth appoint who shall be smitten, when, by whom, how far it shall go, and how long it shall continue, Hosea xi. 6. Jer. xlvii. 6, 7.

Fourthly, He giveth strength and victory unto them that smite and prevail. Eccl. ix. 11. ‘ The battle is not to the strong. Psal. xxxiii. 17. ‘ An horse is a vain thing, neither shall he deliver any by his great strength. Psal. cxliv. 1. ‘ Blessed is the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight. Prov. xxi. 31. ‘ Victory is of the Lord.’

Fifthly, The Lord doth cause war to cease, and command the sword to return and put itself into its scabbard, rest and be still. Jer. xlvii. 6. Psal. xlv. 9. ‘ He maketh war to cease, unto the end of the earth, &c.’

Objection. But some may haply object. We see by experience, that men smite with the sword; yea wicked, them that are good, who for their cruelty are not only menaced, but punished by the Lord of Hosts, for their barbarous cruelty towards his people. How then can they be said to be smitten of God?

Answer. I answer, well enough :—for first, be they who they will, they are of his great army, who is the great General and Lord of Hosts ; they are his soldiers and his sword — Psal. xvii. 13. ‘ Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword.’ And, Zeph. ii. 12. ‘ Ye Ethiopians, ye also shall be slain by my sword.’

Sometimes the Lord doth send wicked men to destroy or finite wicked men, and sometimes to correct his own children for their good* ; that being tried, they may be made manifest, either to themselves for hope, or to others, for imitation. Rom. v. 3. ‘ Knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope’.

2d. The Lord doth menace and punish their cruelty towards his people, and that justly : because they do not smite them in obedience unto God, whose will they inquire not after, but have aims and ends of their own ; yet God doth use them to do his will and pleasure, even then when they do least of all obey him. This you have noted, Isaiah x. 5. ‘ Ashur is the rod of his indignation, or anger ; and God doth send him against an hypocritical nation, &c.’—and verse 7. ‘ He meaneth not so, his end is not to punish an hypocritical nation, neither doth his heart think so : But it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations, not a few. His aim is not to serve the Lord, but by his tyranny to enlarge his dominions, and to subject as many people as he could unto himself, and so to serve his own ambition and avarice ; and therefore the will of his God was not his rule, unto which he had no regard, but did abuse his power, and, (as Hierome doth observe on the place) went beyond the bounds of God’s anger, and beyond his own commission. The like may be noted in Jehu, (2 Kings ix. 7, 8) who was sent of God to destroy Jezebel and the false prophets, and the whole house of Ahab. 2 Kings x. 30. ‘ And he did well in executing that which was right in the sight of God, and is promised a reward for his service.’ Hosea i. 4. ‘ Yet the Lord will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu’. And the reason is, because Jehu had ano-

* Aug. contra secundum Manicheum. cap. 10.

ther aim than God *, for he looked no further than his own honour, that he might reign king; but God aimed at the rooting out of idolatry, by taking away the patrons of idols and authors of it, (Isaiah x. 7.) 2 Kings x. 29. 'Now Jehu departed not from the golden calves that were in Dan and Bethel.'—And the like bye-ends may be noted in others.

Verse 1. If when Israel or any people are smitten by the sword of an enemy, it is the Lord that smiteth them: then it must needs follow, that Germany smitten, and miserably wasted, it is the Lord that smote them. Ireland smitten and almost consumed, the Lord hath smitten them. England, at this time smitten, divided and much weakened, it is the Lord that hath smitten us. This doctrine doth assure us, as the woman of Tekoa doth inform David, that the hand of Joab was in all that; so the hand of God is in all this: his hand hath smitten both them and us. The more therefore to blame we, and the greater our sin, who look much below the hand of God. It was a just complaint of our prophet, Isaiah xxvi. 11. 'Lord when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see:' and in this chapter (as was noted before) he chargeth his people, that they were so far from turning to him that smote them, as they took no notice of the hand that hurt them. Israel looks lower than heaven, than the hand of God, and looks on other hands; they could not see his hand that smote them. I fear Israel and England are so like each other in this, as England is the worse. I remember what one hath noted of Israel, and I pray let us consider whether it be not true also of England, even at this day. When the Jews endured so many miseries, even from their first plantation in the land unto their final casting out, they were seldom aware of this point, &c. If the Philistines, Canaanites, and other borderers upon them, do spoil their country, tyrannize over them, and oppress them with cruel slavery, as they did in the times of the Judges, they will interpret this to be nothing, but an old grudge of these nations for dispossessing them of their country, for which they were hated, and all occasions sought to

* Annon hoc faciunt omnes qui de corpore diaboli sunt, Oecolamp.

work revenge. If the kingdom be divided, that is nothing but Rehoboam's folly, and ill counsel of ill-advised courtiers. If Israel make war on Judah, or Judah upon Israel, that is but policy to keep down one another, lest one should encroach upon both kingdoms: If there be civil war, that is through the factions of potent and ambitious statesmen. If a foreigner invade them, it is nothing but the pride of ambitious tyrants, that cannot be content with their own, but seek after glory and greatness in the ruin of other kingdoms. Yea if Salmanazer, or Nebuchadnezzar, carry them away captive out of their land, though they may think God not well pleased with them, in the general, yet they would resolve these effects into other causes, more proper as they conceive. It was weakness in their kings degenerating from their ancient valour: want of confederates, of good counsellors, of skilful and trusty commanders, of hardy soldiers, they were overborne by multitudes; and these, or some things like these, were the cause of this misfortune, &c. 'But the hand of God they will not see:—they will ascribe it rather unto any thing than unto the hand of God. Just as Salvian speaks of the people of his time, in case of good success, *Alius fortunæ, Alius eventui, &c.* One doth ascribe it to fortune, another unto event, a third unto the advice of their leaders, a fourth unto good counsel, &c. *nihilus Deo.* Hardly any unto God. How true this is of our times, and whether this be not our national sin, I shall leave you to consider and judge; and if so, it is very great, and we in it like Israel, and not much beyond the heathen,—nay, much behind some of them who were wont to look much higher than many of our people do. For to say nothing of him, that having slain a great enemy of his country, and when there was a strife among the officers, who should give him most honour, did ascribe all to heaven, and would take nothing to himself and others, but only the lending their hands unto the work; they ascribing victory and success unto *Fortune* and *Victoria*, did as they imagined, ascribe them to God*. For Fortune, as they thought, was a divine power, and no less indeed than a God; and the like they held of Victoria, as Augustus noteth †.

* Plin. lib. 27. cap. 3.

† De civit. Dei, lib. 4. cap. 14

This sin is so much the more to be noted and reprov'd, as it is more sinful and dangerous; for it is a fault in the first concoction of the use which should be made of the judgments of God, not to be recovered in the rest. — It is observed by two learned Expositors upon the text *, that Israel, not acknowledging whence these strokes came, therefore they did not turn by true repentance unto the Lord, 'neither did they seek him.' And whereas these strokes were laid on them that they might convert; being neglected, they became more obstinate †. It is the policy of Satan, not unlike to that of Jeroboam, 1 Kings xii. 26, 27. 'Who fearing if the people should go up to Jerusalem, to sacrifice in the house of God, that their heart would turn again unto their Lord, the King of Judah.' And therefore he doth set up golden calves, and said unto them, 'It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem, behold thy gods, O Israel, &c.' Thus the devil, well knowing it might prove dangerous, if men should look so high as the hand of God; for then they might possibly lay to heart his hand, and enquire into the cause, and fall out with their sin, and fall off from Satan; therefore he endeavours to make them to cast their eyes upon golden calves, and doth fasten them on any thing on earth, that they may not look up to heaven: and by this means it cometh to pass, that God loseth all the glory, and they all the gain of his mercies and punishment upon them for their amendments.

Secondly, verse 2. This doctrine may serve for comfort and support unto God's people, to remove and mitigate sorrow, especially in the excess in saddest times of sinning. And truly, such times call for cordials, and such an use of this doctrine. For when the Lord cometh, towards his own, in a warlike habit and posture, when he approacheth near unto them with wrath in his countenance, and a destroying sword, a bloody rod in his hand, the dearest of saints falling into the hands and unto the mercy of barbarous and cruel bloody men, may seem to exceed in fear, yea and fly in such trembling fits to try some ill conclusions, if they stay not themselves, they may fear the fear of the wicked, and say,

* Suepff.

† Oecolamp.

‘A confederacy with them, to whom they say a confederacy,’
 Isaiah viii. 12. Their fear may drive them to make unlawful leagues, or to be of the opinion, judgment or practice of the wicked, in working out their way out of danger, and at the least withdraw themselves from God, in whom alone is help and comfort in time of trouble and danger. As it is noted of Astianax, when his own father came towards him armed, (although it was to embrace him) yet being afraid at the sight of his head-piece and hairy plume bending towards him: the child doth forthwith hide his face in his nurse’s bosom, and cry; the poor child took his father in that habit, for a foe, rather than a friend. Thus God’s children may mistake, and fear, yea and fly unto the creature for shelter. But now this doctrine being remembered, ‘that it is God that smiteth,’ and that the rod or sword is in the hand of our heavenly Father: when Turk, or traitor, some Irish rebel, English Papist or Atheist, is the sword, yet the hand of God doth order and guide it; and whatsoever their malice or bloody cruelty may be, yet it shall do no more, nor go any farther, than he shall carry it; they cannot move but as they are guided and ordered by him: this will quiet their spirits and stay their fears. You know when some general or commander of an army is reported to be barbarous and cruel, it strikes great fear into the hearts of such as apprehend his terrible approach: as on the contrary, if the general be reputed a mild and merciful man, it doth much mitigate the fear of such as are like to fall into his hands. When therefore, we shall consider, that the great Commander of all armies, and Lord of Hosts, is the friend, yea the father of Israel, of his people, and that all counsels and smitings, yea and the very motions of wicked men are at his disposal: it makes no matter who, or what they are, the strokes shall be no more nor heavier, than our heavenly Father shall appoint. Psal. lxxvi. 10 ‘Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.’ The fierceness and cruelty that they exercise against his servants, shall be so ordered, as shall be for the glory of God and for the good of his people, even then when they prevail. And the residue of it, God will restrain from effecting and attempting further evil; so that

whatsoever strength and power they have joined with their rage, it shall be limited unto what may be for the glory of God, and good of his people; neither shall it break forth further than is expedient unto these ends, be it never so great.

And as they shall be no greater, so neither shall they bear them longer than is meet and convenient. Pſal. cxxv. 3. 'For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity': 'He at his pleasure maketh wars to cease, Pſal. xlv. 9.'

Finally, this smiting shall not so much wound, destroy and kill, as heal, cure, and save his people: for, Isaiah xxvii. 7, 8, 9. God doth not smite his people as he smiteth those that smite him, &c. But in measure, &c. verse 8. And 'by this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin, &c;' which well considered, would prove a sweet cordial of comfort in these smiting times: and who would think much to be smitten by such a hand? I have read, that among the Persians, he that is commanded to be beaten by the king, doth give thanks unto him, accounting it to be a happy thing, *quod rex sui memor fuerit*, that the king is mindful of him. Sure I am, they that are smitten of God their Father, have cause to account it a favour; for if the wounds of a friend be faithful, how much more the strokes of such a Father? they are ever laid on his in faithfulness, and so in mercy, to make them fit to receive his promises of grace, and to free them from sin. And to this end, David doth desire that the righteous might smite him, and he should take it for a kindness, Pſal. cxli. 5. It is reported of Cyrus, that he knew the names of all that were in his army; the Lord doth know the names and conditions of all in his, and will see that none shall have more or heavier strokes laid on them than they shall be able to bear; for the hairs of their heads are numbered, and not one of them doth fall on the ground but by his providence. I conclude with Isaiah liv. verse 4 and 5. 'Fear not, for thy Maker is thine Husband:—the Lord of Hosts is his name, &c.'

Verse 3. Now in the last place, this doctrine may serve to elevate our eyes, and raise up our thoughts above and beyond those visible hands with which we are smitten. Car-

nal men are wont, like the dog, to eye and snap at the stone, not looking at the hand; and therefore they howl, repine, murmur, and vex themselves, gnaw their tongues, and tear their flesh, and break their hearts under their burdens; and yet for all this they make no use of their smiting.

And the people of God themselves (as it must be acknowledged) are too apt to look too much, and dwell too long upon second causes: they many times, as young Samuel, (when God called) he runneth to Eli, so they run to men and means, when they should answer to God calling them unto himself; and this, on both sides, is not only an hinderance unto them, so as they do not improve the strokes unto their ends, but many times a means to make them impatient, and ill advised at the least: Whereas if they did consider that it is the Lord that smiteth, it would make them dumb, and not to dare to open their mouths, because he doth it, Psal. xxxix. 9. Therefore, as a remedy of impatience and many other evils, which may, and many times do follow upon the non-observance of his hand in smiting, let us mind and remember this doctrine, that when any people is smitten, it is the Lord that smiteth them; and then we shall always join these together in our thoughts, as they did in their cry, Judges vii. 20. 'The sword of the Lord and of Gideon:' and then we shall the better follow the counsel given, Micah vi. 9. 'The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: bear ye the rod and who hath appointed it.'

Thus we have done with the first point, which sheweth who it is that smiteth Israel, or any people that are smitten, although by a foreign enemy, in war.

Now we come unto the second, which declareth what use Israel made of their smiting, and how ill their behaviour under the rod was taken. And here we have three distinct particulars, which we shall for brevity's sake join in the doctrine, and distinguish in the use.

1. The ground and cause of their smiting.
2. The end at which God aimeth in his smiting Israel, that which moved the Lord to smite them, and the use they should have made of his strokes, which are both implied in the word *turn*; the contrary whereof is laid to their charge:

they did not turn; he smote them for their turning from him, and that they might turn unto him

3d. The Lord, by the prophet, doth charge this upon them as a great and heinous offence; for which this is here charged on them as an heinous crime, (as before you heard) that the people did not turn to him that smote them, and brought in as the cause or reason why the anger of God did continue, and his hand was still stretched forth: So then the next doctrine may be thus propounded:—

Doctrine Second, That it is an offence very heinous (a crime of a high nature) for Israel, or any people, being smitten of God for their sin, that they might return and seek the Lord of Hosts, to continue impenitent and obstinate, so as not to turn to him that smiteth them.

Or more briefly thus:

That it is a wrath-provoking sin for a people being smitten of God with the sword of an enemy for their sin, to continue obstinate, so as not to return.

I shall speak something by way of explication.

First, Of this short description of God, stiled *The Lord of Hosts*, unto whom they should have turned.

Secondly, Of the duty which they did owe and should have performed, which was to turn and seek the Lord of Hosts: and then we shall farther declare how, and why this should be charged on them, or any people, as a crime so heinous, or sin so grievous; and then come to the use—

First, The Lord is stiled the Lord of Hosts; and it is an usual title or attribute, which is given and taken by himself, as a stile well fitting his majesty: and the Lord is so stiled, because that all creatures are his army, and he their General and great Commander. Gen. ii. 1. 'Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.' By a metaphor, he calleth the creatures with which the several parts of the world are adorned, an host: for hereby is meant all creatures in the earth and heavens, which stand as an

army; thus in the highest heavens there are the glorious angels, who are a part of this host or army, Luke ii. 13. 15.

Secondly, In the visible heavens, the stars; and they are sometimes brought forth to fight against the enemies of the Lord of Hosts and his people—Judges v. 20. they fought against Sisera.

Thirdly, In the lower heavens, the fowls of the air are a part of God's army; and in the water, the fishes; in the earth, men, beasts, and creeping things*: for they all are said to be an army in respect of God, whom they serve; and therefore he is called the Lord of Hosts, Psal. cxix. 91: Isaiah xlv. 12. Joel ii. 25.

Now all creatures being called the armies of God, by way of resemblance, you may briefly note wherein especially that resemblance doth stand; namely, in these and the like particulars:

First, In respect of their number: for any multitude in scripture is called an army, if it be orderly†; and armies usually consist of great numbers.

Secondly, In respect of order, which is especially observed in armies; and this maketh the host of God admirable: and the very word translated *host*, Gen. ii. 1. doth signify an army standing in order.

Thirdly, In respect of obedience: In armies well ordered, the soldiers are obedient, and at the beck and command of their captain, as Matth. viii. 9.; and thus locusts, flies, and every creature, are at the command of their General.

Fourthly, I shall add one thing more, and that is in respect of power. Armies are very potent, and some have been formidable and irresistible; and thus the army of the Lord of Hosts is formidable and irresistible, who with flies, frogs, and such like, is able to overcome as potent and proud an enemy as Pharaoh king of Egypt. In these and the like respects, the creatures are said to be the hosts of God. I might (for prevention of mistake) further note, how that there is not a resemblance in every thing: for, other armies or hosts are raised for defence, and may, although great, be put to the worst; but it is not so with God, who hath no need of any creature, nor can be resisted; but I omit that,

* Piscat.

† Illenc.

and this shall serve for the first particular, how God is styled the Lord of Hosts.

Secondly, Let us, in the next place, consider what it is to turn unto the Lord of Hosts, or him that smiteth. The word here used, is sometimes translated *turn*, and sometimes *return*; as you may see in these places, Isaiah vi. 13. 37. 7. and chap. xxxi. 6. Jer. iii. 7. &c. It doth properly note out local motion of them that pass or move from place to place; leaving some place or person where, or with whom they were before:—thus, 1 Sam. vii. 17. Samuel's return was to Ramah, for there was his house, &c. but it cannot be taken so here, for, Psal. cxxxix. 7, 8. it is not possible to go from the presence of God; if one ascend to heaven, or make his bed in hell, God is there, &c. The phrase is translated from local motion of the body, and applied unto spiritual motions. in which men, by a kind of similitude, are said to walk, to depart, or go from, and return again unto the Lord. And it may be noted in the words of Austin, *Aliud est migrare corpore aliud corde*, &c. It is one thing to move from place to place in body, and another thing to move from place to place in heart. In body, he doth move from place to place, that doth change his place; he doth it in heart, *qui cordis mutat effectum: si aliud amas, & aliud amabas, non ibi es, ubi eras* *. He doth move in heart from where he was, that doth change the affection of his heart; and if thou didst love one thing, and dost now love another, thou art not there where thou wast before: By sinning against God, withdrawing our affections from him, and placing them upon the creature, we go away from God. Sin is contrary unto the nature of God, and far from him: and when, on the contrary part, we place our affections on him, and become obedient, we return to him from sin and vice unto virtue and grace; and therefore, as he further observeth to this purpose, he that believeth doth come, and he that goeth away. *non movetur anima pedibus, sed affectibus* †; the soul is not moved with feet, but with affections; and God, who is despised in any place, doth depart from their hearts

* Aug. Deut. 32. In Joan. cap. 7. to 9. p. 256.

† Aug. in Joan. tract 48. p. 351.

who do forsake him in their manners and lives, not with their feet; he cometh to them who turn to him not with their face but with their faith, and approach unto him in their minds, not with their flesh. In a word, by serious repentance we turn to him; so that to turn to God is to repent, or convert from Satan and sin, to God. Acts iii. 19. 'Repent and be converted:' And, Ezek. xviii. 30. 'Repent and turn yourselves from your iniquities, &c'.

Thirdly, Let us, in the last place, note what it is to seek the Lord of Hosts, which is the other act or branch of the duty they should have performed. To seek the Lord of Hosts (as is observed by one upon the words) is sometimes to pray, Psal. xxxiv. 4. 'I sought the Lord.' And sometimes to obey, it is put for the observation of the commandments, 2 Chron. xiv. 4. Asa commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandments; but it will not be amiss to open this phrase a little further, which doth very often occur in scripture. The word is borrowed from common use, (as the former) and seeking properly, is a solicitous and sedulous action of one's desiring and endeavouring to find some person or thing which they apprehend to be lost, or at least, is out of their hand and possession, Luke ii. 15.—44. and iv. 8. This being the proper use of the word, doth hold some proportion with this duty of seeking, applied unto higher objects and divine things; generally it may imply and comprehend repentance, and all other acts and exercises, whereby the Lord of Hosts is sought and may be found; and more especially, it is called a seeking of his face, 1 Chron. xvi. 11.

For God is every where in his essence and power, as an antient hath noted*, *Deus manet intra omnia, extra omnia, &c.* God abideth within all things, without all things, and he is above and below all things: He is above all things in his power and dominion, and below all things by his sustentation; without all things by his greatness, and within all things by his piercing and subtile nature.

But the face and favour of God is not so extensive as his presence.

To seek the Lord, is to use all means by which his favour may be obtained, and his grace exercised and manifested to us;

* Greg.

and this seeking God is to rest on him, to believe in him, to obey his will, to worship and serve him, in no otherwise than himself hath appointed; and being angry, to endeavour reconciliation, and to implore his help and grace. Others say, men seek the Lord by faith, repentance, an intire and serious endeavour and desire of the heart after reconciliation and grace with prayers, and an endeavour after righteousness; and beneficence, by putting off the old man and putting on the new.

Now that which is charged upon Israel is, that they did not seek the Lord of Hosts. It was their duty so to seek the Lord, as hath been set forth; but (as I conceive) the prophet doth not speak of such a seeking in this place, but of a lesser degree of seeking than turning unto him; for it is a further amplification and aggravation of their sin, (as was before noted). In the resolution of the words, they were so far from turning to God, by true repentance and conversion, as they did not so much as acknowledge and crave pardon for their sin; they did not perceive and take notice of the wrath of God against them for their sin, and therefore did not cry to him for mercy, as the Lord of Hosts, by whom they were smitten, and in whose power it was to wound and heal, to save and destroy them; which is a great aggravation of their sin, that they did not at all seek to him who was the Lord of Hosts, able to help or hurt whom he would: For had he been unable to hurt or help, or were he so far off as they might seem to be out of his reach, or that he had not at all to do with them, it had not been so necessary that they should have sought him; but he being the Lord of Hosts, and he that smote them, and was able utterly to ruin and destroy them—for them not to turn nor so much as seek unto him, was an offence of a very high nature. It seems to be such a kind of aggravation of their sin, as that, Jer. v. 21. 22.

Now, for the proof of this doctrine, I shall have less need to spend time; because the doctrine is so near unto the words, at least the sense and scope of the text: for they are charged with this as an heinous crime, and as the cause of anger and smiting continued, that they did not turn, &c. You may please to observe, that, Jer. ii. 30. 'In vain have I smitten your children, they received no correction, &c. And, chap.

v. 3. 4. ' O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return. Therefore I said, Surely these are poor, they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.' In which places, especially the latter, they are charged with obstinacy, in contemning chastisements and corrections; which contempt of theirs did greatly provoke the Lord to wrath against them, Isaiah i. 5. there the prophet doth charge them with obstinacy and impenitency as an high and heinous offence, that neither mercy nor correction would make them better, and many such places might be pointed out to this purpose. I shall only add, that (Amos iv. 8. and thence to the end of the chapter) they are reprov'd, or rather reproach'd and upbraided with this: that notwithstanding they had been visited with all sorts of judgments, and yet they did not for all that return unto him that smote them.

Reason. Now if any ask, why this should be an offence so heinous, and such a provocation of wrath not to return, being under the rod?—The reason is manifest, and partly intimated in the terms of the doctrine, and in what was brought for proof; such do remain impenitent and obstinate, they sin not of infirmity and weakness, but of stubbornness and wilfulness, and now they refuse to receive correction:—' they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refused to return,' Jer. v. 3. Such men are unfruitful under means, unthankful for mercy, frustrate God's endeavour to do them good, shew themselves incorrigible, and irrecoverable when mercies or judgments will do them no good. In Jer. vi. 29, 30. the desperate condition of such an obstinate people is excellently set forth, by comparing such sinners unto Ore, God unto a refiner, and his word unto a furnace; these means used to take away the dross of their sin, and not prevailing, he with indignation doth now cast them away as dross that is good for nothing.

Use 1. Thus having cleared the doctrine, I shall come to the uses, which might be many, but that I must hasten unto the last point, which I chiefly intend. This doctrine will in the

first place, (by considering the implied cause and ground of the quarrel between God and a people, the cause of smiting, which is falling or turning from him by sin) inform us of the most malignant and pernicious nature of sin—it is a serpent which usually sheweth an amiable face, but hideth its venomous tail, that men may more boldly venture upon it; but what shows soever it maketh to the contrary, we shall find it a sawning enemy, a sweet poison and a deadly serpent: it may be sweet in the mouth, but it will be bitter in the belly, as Job xx. 12, ‘ Though wickedness be sweet in the mouth of the sinner, though he hide it under his tongue; though he spare it, and forsake it not, but keep it still within his mouth: Yet his meat in his bowels is turned, it is the gall of asps within him.’ And as the prophet, Jer. ii. 19. ‘ It is an evil thing and a bitter to forsake the Lord.’ This Delilah, this Absalom, so much affected, beloved and delighted, doth provoke God to anger, and draw down punishment upon us; sin sets heaven against us, keepeth good things from us; if famine, war, pestilence, or any other judgment seize on the land, we may thank sin for it, which is the only procuring cause of it. God smote Israel for their sinful forsaking him, and he smote them that they might return. If this were well considered, we should not so easily entertain and embrace this hateful enemy, presenting itself unto us in friendly and delightful shapes; but we look on sin as a tender mother on the fruit of her womb smiling upon her, and representing nothing but what is delightful unto it; whereas looking upon that tender infant through the prospective of God’s word, she might see a rebel, a traitor, a serpent full of deadly poison, and which may prove a Judas, another Absalom, if not renewed or restrained by grace. Thus sin looked upon through the word, although in the shape of pleasure, profit, &c. yet it is that which doth cause the Lord to be angry, and in anger to smite us with bloody strokes of the destroying sword.

Use. 2. In the next place, this doctrine may further inform us of God’s mercy in his heavy and grievous judgments. ‘ God smiteth, that they might return unto him:’ His aim and endeavour is to do Israel, or another people good, by smiting them: he would not come to blows at all, if words

would serve the turn, or any warning be taken; but if words will not, if no warning may serve, then the rod must open the ear, and if it may make us return, it is howsoever from the wisdom and goodness of God, that a sinful people are smitten; for hereby he applieth an healing hand unto such 'as would perish without such means used for their good.' This is that which must recover them, if they be not incurable; for it is the physic which his own wisdom hath found out, and prescribed to us, in recovering such as we have under our hands. Prov. xxii. 15. 'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child: but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.' And therefore, Prov. xxiii. 13. 'Correction must not be withheld from the child; for if he be beaten with the rod he shall not die.'—Verse 14. 'Thou shalt beat him with the rod and shalt deliver his soul from hell.' So that to use the rod, is to shew love and care for the child's good; 'but to spare the rod, is to hate the son; and he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes, Prov. xiii. 24. God doth exercise his Fatherly goodness, even in smiting, that he may cause men to turn to him when he is smiting them. That of Hab. i. 12. is worthy observation:—'Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine holy one? we shall not die: thou hast ordained them for judgment, and O mighty God thou hast established them for correction.' Where he sheweth, how that although God suffered the enemies of his people to spoil them, yet he was their God, and kept his covenant with them. By noting the manner and end of such a smiting, he sheweth that the Lord doth order and dispose them by his Providence, and that he had a gracious end in such strokes, not to kill but to correct them. And finally, there was a measure in the manner of his smiting his people by their enemies, as the word judgment doth imply, they had bounds set, which they could not pass.

Use 3. A third use of this doctrine may be to inform us concerning the use and improvement of this smiting. Hereby a nation, and so a particular person, may see, whether they have made a right use of the strokes of war, or any other judgment; 'If they have caused us to turn to him that smiteth us,' and that we have been brought to learn obedience, (as our Lord did) by the things which he suffered,

Heb. v. 8. and that as David saith of himself, Psal. cxix. 67. 'Before I was afflicted, I went astray: but now have I kept thy word:'—thus if the land can say, and the inhabitants of it, looking unto the cause of the controversy of God, Hosea iv. 1, 2. The cause of the controversy with Israel, is the want of truth, mercy, and the knowledge of God. And because by swearing and lying, and killing and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. There are many other sins which move God to be angry with Israel, some of which we noted in the context; these are, for instance, now if a man can say before these wars began, I was a liar, but now have I cast off lying and speak the truth; I was a cruel man, but now am full of bowels of mercy, and tender affection and humanity; I was ignorant and Atheistical, without the fear of God in my heart, but now have I gotten some knowledge, and fear of God into my soul. And so of the rest:—I did use profanely to swear, made no conscience of lying, and other sins; but now I fear an oath, speak truth, and am tender of the life, and just in the dealing with the state of my neighbour, &c. Surely this man may be said to have profited by this judgment, which is become a correction unto him for his amendment: and the like may be said of a nation. But if it may be said of such a nation, or person, because they were false, unjust, and ignorant, before God smote the land, and they are such still:—they were prophane swearers before, and are such still: Liars before, and are liars still; and so of the rest. It is sure such a person, or nation, hath not made the right and true use of such strokes, 'which should have caused them to turn to him that smiteth them.'

Use 4. The last use we shall make of this doctrine is examination and reprehension. Israel did not turn to him that smote them. It is a heinous crime laid to their charge, and a very great offence. The use therefore of this doctrine, by way of resolution, would be examination of ourselves; namely, that every one should consider, and enquire, What do I? What do we? and am not I to be charged justly with some such crime, and provoking sin? May it not be laid to my charge, 'that I turn not to him that smiteth?' I fear it may too truly be laid to our charge, as it is charged on Israel, 'That the

people turn not to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts. But as it is said of Israel, Hosea vii. 10. it may truly be said of England, that the pride of Israel testifieth to his face, 'and they do not return unto the Lord God, nor seek him for all this.' That is, notwithstanding all warnings, menaces, corrections, and severe punishment, they are not bettered: they yield neither to words nor blows, but hold on their sinful course, continue obstinate, although grievously afflicted and oppressed, and that their pride doth testify to their face, they are evidently convinced of it. In this pride they did slight and contemn all warnings, which is an argument of intolerable pride indeed. They were admonished, reprov'd and warn'd, yet did not regard it. I wish it were not true of us, who have been for many years together admonished and warn'd: for as Jeremiah (xxv. 4. 5.) speaks of the people of his time, 'The Lord hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets, rising early, and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.' Then he sheweth what their message was: They said, 'Turn ye again now every one from his evil way, and from the evil of your doings, and dwell in the land that the Lord hath given unto you, and to your fathers for ever and ever, &c.' Then he sheweth what use they made of this admonition, and message, verse 7. 'Yet ye have not hearkened unto me, saith the Lord, that ye might provoke me to anger, with the work of your hands, unto your own hurt.' But of this more in the next point.

Thus much of the second doctrine, I proceed now unto the third and last, which is this:

Doctrine 3. Israel smitten for his sins, and not returning and seeking the Lord of Hosts, moveth God to continue his anger, and to stretch forth his smiting hand still.

This doctrine I chiefly intended, as that which may be suitable unto the time, and useful to us all. The worst is, I fear I shall not have time to speak so fully unto it: I shall therefore do as a traveller that is likely to be belated, pass over such things as are not of necessity, and pass over the next way unto what I principally intend.

The doctrine may be propounded in *thesi* as well as the former; or we may propose it in *hypothesi*: it will be useful either way. If you please, you may take it thus:—

When God is angry with Israel, or any people in covenant, and smiteth them with the sword of an enemy for their sins, if they do not return and seek the Lord of Hosts, God will continue his anger, and stretch forth his hand still.

I conceive the doctrine for the ground to be so clear, and for meaning so plain, as I need not waste time (which we shall want) in explication or proof.

For the ground of it, briefly let this be observed, that whereas in the former verse he had avouched God to be angry still, and still to stretch forth his hand to smite, although they had been grievously smitten before, he sheweth this to be the cause and just ground of the continuance of anger and smiting; namely, that they do not turn to him that smiteth, nor seek the Lord of Hosts. So that this reason in its relation doth hold forth the doctrine, that ‘when God is angry with Israel or any people in covenant, and smiteth them with the sword of an enemy for their sin, if they return not, neither seek the Lord of Hosts, he will continue his anger, and stretch forth his destroying hand still.’

And for the sense, only in general, for I have not time to speak of the terms in particular; when the Lord brings the sword upon a people to cause them to repent and return unto him, if they continue impenitent and obstinate, not repenting of their sin and yielding unto him, the Lord will not cease to be angry, he will not be appeased, nor cease to punish, but will go on and multiply, and make his strokes more and heavier than they were before; for so much is implied, when he saith, ‘His hand is stretched forth still:’ *Parata ad graves pœnas infligendas* * His hand is ready to inflict more heavy and grievous punishments.

Now although I might spare further proof of the doctrine, I shall point you to a place or two, and haste unto the use. That obstinacy under punishment and smiting doth cause anger to continue, yea and punishment to increase, is manifest by that, Levit. xxvi. 17, 18. ‘And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they

* Ursin.

that hate you, shall reign over you, &c.' Then, verse 18. 'And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then will I punish you seven times more for your sins.' Where you see, such as are smitten and do not become obedient, shall feel the hand of God seven times heavier than it was before. In the prophecy of Amos, chap. iv. throughout the latter part of the chapter from verse 6. you have a clear proof of this point, especially verse 12. where (as some understand that place) 'Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel;' that is, I shall bring the punishments before-mentioned, and more heavy and grievous, even ruin and destruction; because they had been punished with lesser punishments, and would not turn unto the Lord, therefore this would he do.

Reason 1. But I pass from the proof, and come briefly to note the reasons of the doctrine, why anger and smiting should be continued and increased: First, It is still continued, because the cause and disease doth still continue; there is the same reason of the continuance of physic, and means to cure the body, as there was of entering upon such a course, if the disease do still continue; and the same reason of continuing corrosives to a sore, as to apply them at first, if proud or dead flesh do still continue; the same reason of correcting a second time as there was of a former correction, if an offender continue to offend: and this is true, whether the strokes are for punishment or correction.

Reason 2. Secondly, Their sin is now more sinful, and therefore deserveth more anger, and calleth for greater punishment:—For, first, they improve not the means used for their good, but abuse the means, and take the name of God in vain.

Secondly, They add contumacy to their sin, and shew themselves to be obstinate, so as their sin is another sin in the nature of it, although the same in the matter: for now they refuse to receive correction, 'and make their faces harder than a rock, and refuse to return,' (Jer. v. 3.) as was before noted out of the prophet.

Thirdly, They shew their love unto their sin, and delight in it to be greater*: for in evil works proceeding from the same habit, the latter are worse than the former; his reite-

* In operationibus malis ab eodem habitu posteriores sunt peiores prioribus. Tostat.

ration doth argue delight in offending, which therefore doth deserve greater punishment.

Fourthly, This continuance in sin under smiting is a sign of obstinate malice and wickedness: for such men being thus punished and do not repent, do *apertum bellum cum Deo agere*, wage open war with God.

Reason 3. Thirdly, I might add another reason, drawn from the end of smiting, which is various, according to the condition of the person smitten. If the man be wicked, and a vessel of wrath, the Lord doth smite to glorify his justice, in taking vengeance of his sin, and so he proportioneth punishment unto the nature of the sin, as Psal. lviii. 10, 11. 'God will overcome when he judgeth,' Rom. iii. 4. If he be a vessel of mercy, and one that the Lord loveth, he will smite him till he make him smart; if he do not attend his pleasure, and turn from sin with lesser strokes, the Lord is forced to make them greater, till he bring down their proud heart, and make them to yield, as Psal. cvii. 11. 12. they do rebel against the words of the Lord, and condemn the counsels of the Most High, therefore he bringeth down their heart with labour, they fall down and there is none to help. The Lord will break the pride of their power, as he threateneth, Levit. xxvi. 19. If the judgment should be removed while the sin is not left, it were judgment and wrath, not mercy and grace; and so much for the reasons and fitting the doctrine for use, I come now to the application.

Use 1. This doctrine thus cleared, the uses might be many, and would require much more time than we have for their full prosecution; but we shall contract ourselves, and apply to the point, first, for Instruction; secondly, for Conviction; thirdly, for Humiliation; and finally, for Exhortation and Direction.

And first, for Instruction and Information: This doctrine will serve to inform us what the true and main cause is that our hopes are delayed, our expectations not answered, endeavours disappointed, designs defeated, and proceedings which might hasten our peace, and happy public-weal, so much retarded. You may find many inferior and lesser causes, and give divers politic reasons; but the great and chief cause is, in truth, that in the text, the obstinacy and impenitency of the nation:— This, I say, this is the cause why our expectations are not answered, why our hopes are blasted, our long desired peace is

deferred, and the smiting hand of God stretched out still, his anger continued and not turned away. 'The people turn not unto him that limiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts.' Here it sticks, and this is the obstruction, the true cause of all our misery, the very reason why we obtain not our long expected mercies. We hoped for an happy peace, the paths whereof drop fatness, and that crowneth the year with her goodness; we promised ourselves that the day would have come before this time, in which we might have seen that verified in Psal. lxxxv. 10. 'Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.' Although it must be confessed, that these expectations did bottom themselves upon prerogative rather than upon an ordinary way of God's proceeding with a sinful and unthankful people; and yet our watchmen and seers thought verily they heard that voice of Christ sounding in their ears, of which the Church makes report in these words, 'My beloved spake and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away: For lo the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land, &c. Cant. x. 11, 12. They thought they saw all good things flowing in upon us, or at least coming towards us.

But since that we were put into such hopes, we have had many fears, great and sore troubles have been brought upon the land; and it may complain, as the Church, 'Thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death, Psal. lxxi. 20.—xliv. 19. And still may we complain of the disappointment of our hopes, as they in the prophet, 'We looked for peace, but behold no good came: and for a time of health, but behold trouble.' Jer. viii. 15. And as it followeth, verse 20. 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved:' no, although we have fasted, and prayed for peace, and earnestly besought the God of peace to grant it; and that our distractions might be composed, that our breaches might be made up, our ruins repaired, and religion settled; that the Lord would be reconciled to the nation, and prince, and people one unto another; and do continue to hold up our hands and lift up our hearts to the throne of grace, for these things, summer after summer, and year after year. These our shouts have not been

(as the prayers of God's people commonly are) as the bow of Jonathan, which turned not back, and the sword of Saul, that returned not empty, 2 Sam. i. 27. We have not seen these our prayers return as the dove did into the ark with an olive branch of a gracious answer in these things. I grant (which to deny or not to acknowledge unto the glory of God, were sinful ingratitude) they have had many gracious answers and grants of such things as we could not have been without, to have preserved us from desolation and ruin; but in the things before-named, they have not yet been answered. It hath been with us in what we have obtained, as with Israel in the wilderness: in the blackest night we have had a pillar of fire, and in the brightest day a pillar of a cloud. Piety and prosperity, and religion and peace, are not yet met to make us happy. Now, why is it thus? and what is the reason?—Where is the obstruction? Is not God as able as ever? his hand as long as ever?—surely it is. But consider the doctrine, and (2 Sam. xxi. 1.) it will be as the Oracle in the three years famine, year by year, as it certified David, there was cause of that famine: So this doctrine will assure us, there is a cause of this continuance of anger and smiting. And it is as 2 Chron. xx. 33. ‘As yet the people had not prepared their hearts unto the God of their fathers:’ so that the high places were not taken away—they did not convert and return—they would not reform their ways:—as in the text, ‘They turn not to him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts.’ It is not because God is not the God that heareth prayers, or that he cannot save, or not willing to afford us mercy: this is not the cause why the hand of mercy is pulled in, and the hand of his wrath is stretched out, but because people are impenitent, and turn not. This, this is the true cause of all our misery, and why we want many a mercy: we make no use of wrath and smiting. And this is that which no doubt hath made the Lord even to repent of the good he intended toward us, as you have it Jer. xviii. 9, 10. ‘At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom to build and to plant it: If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then will I repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them.’ Let this then be the first use; and let it open our eyes to see the true cause of our sorrow, and say with the Church, Lam. v. ‘The

crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us that we have sinned.' For this our heart is faint: for these things our eyes are dim. Israel had sinned, and continued in sin; and England hath sinned, and doth continue in sin under smiting. No marvel therefore, though we pray against war and punishment, and our miseries still continue: for although God heareth prayers, and is able to help, and loveth to be sought and sued unto; yet he seemeth to hold the prayers of his best servants unseasonable, till sin be removed, Josh. vii. 10. 'Get thee up, wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face, Israel hath sinned, &c.'

Use 2. Secondly, This doctrine will serve for ground of conviction, and to make good and drive home a former use of the second doctrine, in which we noted, that upon due examination it would be found that England was guilty of that heinous crime charged on Israel; which was impenitency, and obstinacy under smiting. They did not turn. This was a heavy charge, and no easy and ordinary chiding of Israel; when it was said of them, that they were so obstinate as words, rods, nor swords, would work upon them: For what can be spoken or thought more grievous. It is a great offence and sin if men obey not so soon as they hear a duty propounded, but more grievous if reproofs and chidings will not affect them; but *gravissimum adversus plagas ipsas durescere, vel potius calcitare*, most grievous to grow harder when they are smitten, or rather as it were to spurn against them, and by that means further to incense the anger, and increase the indignation of the Judge, as Calvin observeth on the text. Now the continuance of the anger of God and stretching forth his hand still, did evince the obstinacy and impenitency of Israel there; and doth in like manner prove any other people in covenant with him, if having been smitten, the anger of God continue, and his smiting hand be stretched forth still, that they turn not, but are impenitent: for as God's smiting a people is a proof of their sinning, so his continuing to smite is a proof of their continuance in or not turning from their sin. Punishment follows sin as the shadow follows the body, and as the plaister the sore. Take away the body and the shadow doth cease; when the sore is healed the plaister is no longer used: so when the sin is left, and the land turned to him that smiteth them, the rod is laid aside, the hand is drawn in, and no longer stretched out to strike. When God con-

tinueth the punishment and shews himself angry still, it proveth Israel, England, or any other people smitten for their sin, that they might return and seek the Lord of Hosts, not to have returned and sought him: So that here again, England and Israel are so like, as England is the worse. For Israel, a people very near and dear to God, so abused the bounty of God, as he became angry with them, and smote them with the sword of an enemy; yea, raised up civil war among them, Isaiah vii. 9.—21. Just so it is with England: only with this difference, England hath had more abundance of grace in the gospel, which hath brought forth more abundance of sin in their abuse of it.

Secondly, Israel being smitten, did not turn to seek the Lord. Just so it is with England at this day; being smitten, it doth not return.

Thirdly, Israel is charged with obstinacy and impenitency as an heinous crime and provoking sin: They refused to return; yea, are so far from it as they did not seek the Lord of Hosts. And oh that this might be justly denied of England! but it is true, (as we noted before) our people seem to have hardened their faces as a rock, and they refuse to return, Jer. v. 3 — And although God set watchmen over England, saying, 'Hearken to the sound of the trumpet: yet they said, We will not hearken.' Jer. vi. 17.

Fourthly, And finally, against Israel thus smitten the Lord did continue his anger, &c. and just thus it is with England: the anger of the Lord is not turned, but his hand stretched out still. For of us (as of them) it may be said, the people turn not, &c. Thus England is not so like Israel in name—nothing near as in state of sin and misery.

Objection. But some may say, for all this it is better with England than with Israel; for we do seek the Lord of Hosts daily, and humble our souls before him in our monthly fasts, confess our sins, and seek mercy at his hands.

Answer. I answer, I should be glad to be mistaken; but (as Jeremiah speaks of himself) so may the Ministers of God say of the generality of our people with grief, we hearkened and heard, 'but they spake not right: no man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle, Jer. viii. 6. And who but he that is wilfully blind doth not

sins which usually shew themselves openly as pride drunkenness, not only in men, but in women also—an odious thing that makes them (as the son of Sirach notes) that they cover not their own shame: scripture good enough (although Apocrypha) for such a purpose. Oaths and blasphemies as common and fearful as ever before our smiting.—The like may be said of other sins

Secondly But admit it were not so, that our people did not declare their sin as Sodom, but hide it rather. (Isa. iii. 9.) What shall we say unto the heavy hand of God upon us? and of his anger which is towards us still? If his smiting had its end, he would make an end of smiting; for national turning would turn away national wrath from the nation: and altho' sin be a high wall of separation, yet repentance would break it down (Jer. xviii. 9.) If the nation did truly repent, the Lord would repent of the evil: if England did turn, God would turn his judgments into mercy; but while he goeth on in anger and punishment, it proveth that we go on in sin. When a wise and tender hearted surgeon continueth his corrosives, yea doth still lance, cannerize, and take off now an arm and then a leg you may be sure the child or patient is yet in an ill case. If you should see a loving father lay on his son, and bruise, yea break the very bones of his own child, you could not but think there is some great fault committed. If that should not always hold, yet this is certain, our heavenly Father hath no passion to transport him, nor doth he afflict willingly—man doth suffer for his sin. Such an effect as punishment on a nation doth infallibly conclude such a cause as sin; and the Lord doth manifestly reveal his wrath from heaven against our sins for he hath drawn two swords at once against the nation: and whereas of the two, that of war is the worst, yea the heaviest of God's sore punishments—civil war is of all wars the worst. In which (as the Latin orator said) *In bellis civilibus omnia sunt misera, sed nihil miserrus, quam ipsa victoria*: for it is said of King Edward II. *Tunc vere victus quando tot vicit milites prudentes*. In these wars, although every thing be unhappy, yet nothing more miserable than victory itself; because by victory, such a body doth overcome itself. These heavy judgments bring with them a bad report of wrath. As he that writes of strange grashoppers that did depopulate England, which had writ-

ten upon the one wing in black letters, *ira*, and upon the other, *Dei*! How truly he reports that, I stand not to avouch; but these judgments have *ira Dei*, wrath, and wrath of God, as it were, written upon their wings, and such a wrath as will depopulate and ruin the land, if the wrath be not appeased and these judgments removed; for these divisions are fatal to this island, and will be its infallible ruin.—England being as a great and strong body that will not die, unless it kill itself. Our Lord himself hath said, ‘A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.’ And as the land was darkened when Ephraim was against Manasseh, and Manasseh against Ephraim, Isaiah vii. 9, 10. so is our land under this kind of smiting, in which the Lord doth chastise us with scorpions and not with whips, with destroying swords, and not with chastising rods.

Thirdly, But (for further conviction, and nearer application of this use) it is granted that we do keep days of humiliation, and we seek the Lord, &c. And admit Israel did not so much, although there were (no doubt) among them that did, unto whom (as the most Expositors think) the former cordials were sent. Howsoever this is not enough to take off this charge. For under such smiting as is now upon us, hypocritical Israel might seek unto the Lord for help, as Psal. lxxviii. 34. where it is said of them, that ‘when he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned, and inquired early after God.’—Verse 35. ‘And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer.’—Verse 36. ‘Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues.’—Verse 37. ‘For their heart was not right with him: neither were they stedfast in his covenant.’ There is much deceit in such constrained turning and seeking God. The faithful Ministers of God, who have occasion to visit many on their sick-beds, and when the hand of God is heavy upon them, find by sad experience, how men will at such times flatter with their lips, when their heart is not right; they will sigh, groan, and sometimes weep abundantly, in the confession of their sins, and promise amendment, if God will please to spare them; but hardly one of ten (I had almost said of twenty, it may be, an hundred) that remaineth stedfast in these resolutions, if they do recover: For this turning and seeking God

was not free, but rather forced by the whip and smart. He that is made good by constraint, by necessity, he is never good; (as you shall see) for being loosed from that constraint, he doth return again unto his own disposition: and the reason is manifest; his affection is not changed, only his action constrainedly intermitted. But the bulk and body of the people of this land come far short of this, and seem rather to come home to Israel, who did not so much as seek the Lord of Hosts, &c.—They observe not these days of humiliation unto this end; at least, this is certain, they turn not to him that smiteth them. And the better to clear this, I pray note the manner of speaking here. It is said they returned not—they did not return unto him, *i. e.* they did not repent; and altho' they seemed to turn from their trade and wicked way,—yet *usque ad Deum non redierunt*, that is, they did not turn truly, seriously, fully, constantly and closely, or wholly and altogether. They came not fully home; but did, as it were, stand still in the way, and were but hypocrites feigning repentance, and persevering in their impiety, as they, Psal. lxxviii. 36. and Isaiah xxix. 13. Men may bring shadows of turning, ceremonies of repentance, and think, with them, to flatter away the rod from their backs, and continue still as sinful as ever. Men may, and often times do turn; yet 'not to him that smiteth them.' As for instance,

First, Some turn, but do not return, (as Augustine hath noted *.) A man is said to be turned, who grieveth for the offence, or crime; but he is returned, who doth bewail the vanity of his mind. He is turned from sin who will part with it: He is returned, who is wholly and altogether turned; who doth not only not fear punishment, but doth diligently to make haste to observe the goodness of God. Men may seem to turn from all their sins, and yet not turn so far as unto the Lord.

Secondly, Some turn not unto the Lord, nor yet from all their sins; they still keep some Delilah, as Herod. They may as Saul, slay the lean and keep the fat, at least keep Agag alive, or some special sin. 'Now these turn not to him that smiteth;' for conversion must be from all sin.

* Versum quidem puto, qui dolet de crimine, conversum, qui dolet de animi ni vitate. Vertitur qui jam vult demittere peccatum, convertitur qui jam totus & omnino vertitur, qui jam non tantum pœnas non timere, sed ad bonum domini contendere festinat. De vera & falsa pœnitent.

Thirdly, Some come short of both the former; 'for they turn not to him that smiteth,' although it cannot be denied but that such an one doth turn; yet it is either from God to sin, or from one sin unto another. And these in their practice, contradict what duty calleth for in returning; and truly (as hath been observed) we have many examples of such turnings: our times are turning times, hardly any in which there hath been more turning than now; for men are like weathercocks, turning about with every wind of doctrine. Some turn Papists—some Arminians—some Socinians—some Anabaptists—some Antinomians—some loose Libertines—some Epicures—some Malignants—and some as the dog to his vomit, and sow to the wallowing in the mire. Some who seemed to have left Egypt and forsaken Babylon (as many did with Israel) and to have led the way in a glorious profession, yet have looked back, and with Demas, embraced this present world.

Fourthly, You may go farther and find men yet worse, and farther off from turning; for there is a generation of men, that in practice and open profession, in conversation and resolution, that neither say nor do, return not to God, but resolve as they, Jer. xliv. 15, 16. 'They will not do what the Lord calleth for' but whatsoever thing goeth out of their own mouth, &c.' They in the very height of rebellion, take up arms of hostile opposition against that unto which this smiting doth summon them; and how fearful the condition of such incorrigible rebels is, you may hear from many scriptures, such as Prov. xxix. 1. 1 Sam. ii. 25.

Fifthly, and finally, There is yet an higher degree of aversion from this duty in another rank of men, who are so far from returning themselves, as they labour by all means of evil counsel, corrupt example and encouragement, to abet others in their sinful course, and to withhold such as they perceive to be bent or inclinable to return. Men so vile as they, make it their work to draw as many as they may from this duty. There are, and not a few such masters, parents, neighbours, kindred, acquaintance, and pretended friends among us. I would there were none, or but a very few such of our own tribe, Ministers, guilty of an offence so heinous in any, and most odious in them; unto such I should commend the consideration of that of the prophet, Jer. xxiii. 14.

‘ I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing, they commit adultery, and walk in lies: they strengthen also the hands of evil doers, that none doth return from his wickedness, &c.’ If you shall consider how many there are that will be found faulty, and guilty in the premises, it will be more than manifest, that whatsoever may be done by a small remnant, the body of our people ‘ turn not unto him that smiteth them, nor do they seek the Lord of Hosts.’

And so much for the use of information, and conviction; in which I have been the more large, to make way unto the practical uses of this doctrine.

Use 3. The third use of the point is humiliation, unto which we shall add another of exhortation, and so conclude.

This doctrine considered with the former uses may be just ground of humiliation and mourning, a duty suitable to the day and agreeable to the times in which we live. The day is a day of mourning and fasting, the times we are cast upon are sinful, sad, and sorrowful times, such as may make us mourn with a great and very sore lamentation; and with the prophet, to eat ashes like bread, and mingle our drink with weeping, Psal. x. 2. Yea, tears may be our meat day and night, for joy seemeth to be clean withered from the sons of men, Psal. xlii. 3. Joel i. 12. If the causes we have to mourn were well observed and considered, they might make us blush and bleed; causing, if it were possible, rivers of tears to trickle down our eyes. The causes are many. I shall present you with some few; yet such as if we have either the grace of Christians, or the nature of men, will move us to mourning. Who can think upon the desolation of Germany, without lamentation? Or if we could not see so far, cast an eye upon Ireland nearer hand, and see it wallowing in its own blood, and bleeding itself to death, unless help come from heaven to prevent it. What child can see his father smiting and breaking the bones of his brethren, and not weep? But if the desolations of Germany and miseries of Ireland will not affect us, let us at the least, behold our own calamity with tears. England is smitten with such a stroke as may move all to mourn over her that bear any true love unto her: she is under one of God’s sore judgments mentioned Ezek. xiv. 21. Yea, the very forest of those sore judgments, the sword in the hand of men, an heavier judgment than in the hand of

a destroying angel; and as war is worse than pestilence, so is civil war the worst war of all other, in which, with every stroke, the kingdom doth hurt and endeavour to destroy itself, which is a sad spectacle for strangers to behold. If any of us at any time, see a poor man in an epilepsy or fit of the falling-sickness, lie beating himself against the ground, biting his own tongue, and bestowing all his strength to raise himself up, that he might with greater violence cast himself down again, to the wounding and breaking of himself, beating the breath out of his body, as it may fall out: Such a man may not only bruise his flesh, or break his bones, but destroy himself. Could we in this case, do less than lament this man's condition, although a mere stranger? Or if we should see any man so bereaved of sense, or desperately bent by delirium, or any other cause, as he should wound, stab, and by all means endeavour to destroy himself, one hand wounding the other, or both of them stabbing him in his own bowels, and at last (if not hindered) in the head, or very heart: who, unless without all bowels, but must needs be affected much with the condition of such a man. Our kingdom is at this time in the condition of a man in an epilepsy, and doth beat, bruise, and by all the strength it hath endeavour to undo and destroy itself:—it is so deliriant by the just judgment of God, as it doth study its own ruin; one hand wounding the other, and both stabbing it in the bowels, and at the very heart, unless the Lord shall graciously prevent it. Now if there be cause of sorrow to see one man, and a stranger, in such a condition—with what mourning should we look upon such a flourishing kingdom in such a condition? Who can think of so many men losing their lives, and not knowing what becometh of their immortal souls, (many of them, as it is to be feared, being unfit to die) but must needs mourn? Yet this is not all the cause of humiliation and mourning, if we look up higher from earth to heaven, from men to God, we shall see further and greater cause of mourning; and that is, that heaven lowreth upon us, and the God of heaven is angry with us; ‘his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still:’—yea, by looking into the cause of this continued anger in a God so full of pity, which is the grievous sins of the land; it hath grievously sinned, otherwise he that hath so abounded in goodness towards it, had never sent so sore a punishment

upon it. God hath shewed his love towards England in former times more than towards any nation, putting it as it were in his bosom; and yet he is now wroth with it, and his hand stretched forth still to strike, as if he meant to destroy it, and all for the transgressions of it. 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?' Deut. xxxii. 6.

Neither are these all the causes we have of humiliation and mourning; there is this also, That after our provocation of God, and under his displeasure and these destroying strokes, the people 'turn not to him that smiteth, &c.' That which the prophet here complaineth of, although the Lord have thus smitten us, and doth continue to declare himself greatly displeased with us; yet we continue in sin, and provoke him to provide heavier strokes for us. The day of battle and time of affliction is the furnace that sheweth what metal we are, whether gold or dross; and being dross, we may fear to be utterly forsaken, Jer. vi.

Finally, There is yet another cause, and in some respects greater than the former; and this is a cause why we should mourn, because the kingdom doth not mourn. We have cause of deep humiliation; for that the humiliations of the kingdom are so slight and shallow in the very days destined to humiliation and mourning. When we fast, it is rarely seen or heard that we either weep or sigh. If we mourn, it is with dry eyes, and it is to be feared, with hard hearts; and herein our times seem more hard than any. Israel, and this people of the Jews, had many grievous sins, (as you have heard) in which we are as bad as they; but in this we seem to be much worse. If you look throughout the scripture, and in all ages of that church, you shall perceive them to be of a softer temper. When the Lord sent an angel to tell them that he would not drive out the inhabitants of the land, Judges ii. 4. 'The people (hearing this) lift up their voice and wept.' When the Ministers of God told our people some years past of this judgment we now suffer, some of our people have been ready to laugh, and very many of them heard it as a fable, or that which needed not to be feared, or at all regarded. They, when they heard of judgment coming on the land, or being in danger, could mourn, as 2 Sam. xv. 23.

David and his men being in danger, the story saith, that all the country wept with a loud voice; and Josiah, hearing what was threatened, namely, that they should become a desolation, &c. his heart was tender, and he humbled himself before the Lord and wept, 2 Kings xxii. 19. We, when we see these judgments that make way for desolation on others, and ourselves, yet we shed no tears. When the plague broke in upon the Congregation, Numb. xxv. 6. it is said the people were weeping; but now both pestilence and sword are on the land, and rage in all quarters of it: yet where be the tears of the Congregation? Esau could weep for the loss of his birth-right; but in our times men mourn not for the loss of birth-right, or blessing, no not for the provocation of wrath and judgment: yea, such men among us can take on for some outward loss or hurt, and weep at the unkindness of a friend, yet shed no tears in all these miseries. That exhortation of St. James, iv. 9. is very seasonable:— ‘Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.’ In chap. v. of that Epistle, he exhorts rich men to weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon them. Miseries are come upon us, and we are come to humble ourselves and mourn before the Lord for them, and our sins the cause of these calamities. It is reported of the Jews, not on their days of mourning, but of the greatest rejoicing, in their marriage feasts, that they broke a glass with wine in remembrance of Jerusalem, and say, when they throw it down, thus was Jerusalem broken, and then what they spill in wine they fill up with tears. If they, in the times of their feasting, weep in remembrance of Jerusalem destroyed so long before, what should we do in the days of our solemn fasts, for England, now a breaking? and ready to be ruined with smiting? especially seeing we stand here before the Lord to mourn for our sins, and the sins of the land, which are the cause of these our stripes? And truly if they, when they heard that God would not drive out the inhabitants of the land, but leave them as thorns in their sides, did lift up their voice and weep, Judg. ii. 3,—5. so that the place was thought worthy to be named Bochim-weepers. Now that God is about to destroy and drive out the inhabitants of the land, should we not so weep, as the place of our tears may be made a Bochim! Sure I am,

we may weep much, cry long and loud before the cry of our prayers should outcry our crying sins. And as this duty belongeth to us all in general, so especially unto such as are over the rest, whether of Judea or Levi, (Joel i. 14. and chap. ii. 16, 17.) the rulers and teachers of the people, who at such times as these are, ought to be chief in this duty; and are to mourn not only for their own sins, but (as it were) to bear the iniquity of the kingdom, which no doubt would be very acceptable in them, and in time give them occasion, with David, to say, 'I thank thee, O Lord, that thou hast heard the voice of my weeping.' And for the Ministers, above all others, they seeing how hardly the people are brought either to turn from, or mourn for their sins, after these warnings and smitings, have reason to resolve, with Jeremiah, chap. xiii. 17. 'If ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, &c.' Could they, with the same prophet, (chap. ix. i.) weep day and night for the sin and slain of his people; (and as the prophet Ezekiel is commanded to sigh bitterly, and unto the breaking of his loins) it could not be altogether without cause, considering the sinful, and sad miserable condition of these kingdoms; and yet, alas! the people are as far from mourning as they are from returning to him that smote them. It is true of many among us, which Elihu observeth, Job xxxvi. 12, 13. 'If they obey not, they shall perish by the sword, and they shall die without knowledge. Yet the hypocrites in heart heap up wrath: they cry not when he bindeth them.' Such as do sometimes make fair shows, being still inwardly impure and corrupt, do not humble themselves under the correcting hand of God; nor repenting of their sin, do increase and incense the wrath of God more against them, so far are they from being bettered by affliction, as by their obstinacy they do yet more provoke the anger of God against them. They cry not to God so as they might obtain pardon, grace and help; but content themselves with some formalities and outward shows. Austin maketh mention of a sort of foolish women, who did use to dress themselves fine, and went to the Capitol and sat there all day long, and thought Jupiter was in love with them; there are many among us, that (I fear) come hardly so far as unto the dress and outward formality of this duty, in the days of our humiliation, and yet think God is well

pleased with their service, who yet keep themselves close unto their sins

Use 4. In the last place, *If the anger of the Lord be not turned away, &c. because the people turn not to him that smiteth them:* It will serve for exhortation and direction. Let this move us (as ever we desire the wrath of an angry God should be appeased, the bloody strokes of the destroying sword should be stayed, and the deadly wounds of a bleeding kingdom should be cured) to *turn to him that smiteth us,* and set ourselves to *seek the Lord of Hosts.* This is the result of all, and the principal use of the text and doctrine. Impenitency under wrath and smiting causeth their continuance. That they may cease, let us cease to sin and to go on in sin. The physician, that he may recover his patient of a dangerous distemper, doth first find out, and then endeavour to remove the cause, which is the direct way (according to the rule of his art) unto the recovery of his patient. Our state is in a sick, dangerous, and deadly distemper, and this doctrine sheweth the causes. All that wish well unto it, that desire to do any thing for the recovery of it, must shew themselves physicians of value, by removing the causes, and so procuring the health and happiness of it. You understand why the *anger of God is not turned away, why his hand is stretched out still.* Oh! therefore, that we might all remove the cause, to the utmost of our ability, that if it be possible the effect may cease. This is the way that God himself doth prescribe in many places. I will name but one, and it is that in the prophet Zechariah, i. 2, 3, 4. 'The Lord hath been sore displeased with your fathers. Therefore say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of Hosts. And I will turn unto you saith the Lord of Hosts. Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets cried, saying; Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear, nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord.'

Now because this is a duty of great importance, and that wherein the aims of all that are well affected to church and state, must meet, and that whereunto their endeavours should tend, I shall propose a few considerations to press this use, generally upon all, and then more particularly recommend it unto some whom it doth more specially concern. I have not

time to enlarge myself, and to urge both the branches of the use; the chief is, *turning to him that smiteth*—the other is included in it.

There are a multitude of motives which might be brought to press the duty upon our people, and to move our nation and us all to turn. I name only these.

First, The authority and power of him, unto whom you are exhorted to turn, or of him by whom you are summoned, and that is *the Lord of Hosts*. You are called upon to repent and convert, not by man, but by God: not such a God as you can either shun or resist; for he is *the Lord of Hosts*—stiled the Lord of Hosts in the text; and in that place of Zechariah, which was mentioned before, he is thrice in one verse, called *the Lord of Hosts*: which fearful title might strike terror unto such as should be found guilty of disobedience in this duty, and still refuse to return.

Secondly, There is a great deal of equity in this duty; for by sin we have turned from him, which is the cause of his anger, and all our misery. It is therefore most equal that we return unto him, as our prophet (Isaiah xxxi. 6.) doth urge this duty in these words, Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted. And the equity of this duty, and the iniquity of them that yield not unto it, is set forth by the Lord himself in Jeremiah viii. 4. 'Moreover, thou shalt say unto them, thus saith the Lord, shall they fall, and not rise?—shall he turn away, and not return?' Intimating how unreasonable and inequitable it is for men to fall by sin; and when they have so done, to refuse to rise and return by repentance again unto him from whom they fell.

Thirdly, Another motive is drawn from the *terminus a quo, & ad quem*, from what and unto whom we are to turn, which will further open and urge the former motive. This conversion is in a word, *from darkness to light, from sin to grace, from evil to good, from Satan unto God*, Acts xvi. 19. It is from the way of sin, which is evil—unto the way of righteousness, which is good; from that path which is foul, to that which is clean; from a course which is full of fear, and danger, and loss unto that which is comfortable, safe, and exceeding advantageous to all that

walk in it, as you may see, Prov. iv. 11,—18. iii. 17,—22. xi. 3. and Psal. cxvii. 1.

So that as Bern hath it, *Dico omnes Deum ignorare qui nolunt ad eum converti*. I say all such are ignorant of God, that will not turn unto him: they do not know him to be that chief good by whom they may be made happy; and therefore they do turn aside unto vain things, that cannot profit.

Fourthly, Another motive may be the hope we have of turning away the strokes from the land, and of anger from ourselves, and that God will be reconciled unto us; and we turning to him by repentance, he will turn to us in mercy, pardon and grace,—that which you have set forth in many places, and that before quoted, Zech. i. 3. ‘Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of Hosts.’ This is sure, that the soul which doth truly turn, shall find God reconciled unto him. Never did any make use of this counsel and perish, and the Lord will repent him of the evil, ‘If men will hearken and turn, every man from his evil ways, Jer. xxvi. 3. Jonah iii. ult.

Fifthly, For our farther encouragement, the experience we have had of the mercy of God, well considered, might be a very strong motive to this duty. For as it was said of Israel, Psal. cxlviii. 14. ‘that they were a people near unto him;’ so may it be said of us, that we have been a people near unto him, and he hath shewed himself nigh to us in all that we call upon him for, Deut. iv. 7.

Sixthly, In the last place, there is a motive drawn from the necessity of our repentance, and conversion unto God. This motive lieth in the text and context, *the anger of God is continued, his hand is still stretched forth; yea, the Lord will strike yet heavier strokes*. And as it followeth in the next verse unto the text, *Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel, head and tail, branch and rush, in one day*. Seeing they will not return, he will suddenly destroy them, the mighty and the mean, the honourable and the base—ruin and destruction shall seize upon them, if the people turn not; the anger of God shall not turn away,—no, his wrath will be further increased—his strokes will be heavier than they have been; and that black and bloody cloud which hangeth over our heads, will break and fall upon us, if we remain impenitent. In vain shall we promise to our-

selves peace, and look for mercy, if we cast off the care of our duty; although we seek the Lord of Hosts. Fast, pray, and think nothing too much, that we hazard and lay out and bestow; if we turn not, it will do nothing for our security from utter ruin. — That which is noted of Cæsar, when one was up in arms against him, yet sent him a crown at the very same time; but Cæsar sent back his crown, with this message—Let him return first unto his obedience; and then the crown might be accepted. If we use other means, any means to obtain favour with God, and keep ourselves still to our sins, and so continue in rebellion, and refuse to do his commands—had we crowns to dedicate to his honour, all were but vain, unless we return first to our obedience. Let us therefore consider the authority of God—who requires we should return unto him. The equity of this duty, the good that may be expected in the way of mercy—if these will not prevail with us, yet let the consideration of the anger of the Lord of Hosts—the sword in his hand, which is stretched forth to strike with strokes of death and ruin. Let this make us to resolve, even all of us, to return ‘and seek the Lord of Hosts.’ God judgeth the righteous, and is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not he will whet his sword: He hath bent his bow and made it ready; he hath also prepared for himself the instruments of death, &c. as the Psalmist hath it, Psal. vii. 12, 13. So that (as Austin observeth) *quia illi nolunt converti in melius, Deum convertunt in pejus*. Inasmuch they will not turn better, they turn God upon that which is worse. For, Levit. xxvi. 18. ‘If you will not yet for all this hearken; then will I punish you seven times more for your sins.’ To conclude, consider that pathetical passage of the prophet, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. ‘As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live: Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?’

Now, before I leave this branch of the use, it will be necessary to add a few things for direction unto this duty, to help them that are willing to put it in practice, but ignorant. I shall therefore briefly note unto you, how we must turn to him that smiteth, in these four ensuing particulars.

First, Sincerely, not formally and alone in the outward man*; which, let it make never so great a show, yet it cometh to nothing:—therefore, Joel ii. 12, 13. it must be even unto God with all the heart, &c.

Secondly, Entirely, we must turn from sin—not some—but all; not from sin alone, but unto God: and truth must aspire unto perfection.

Thirdly, We must turn speedily; God calling for a duty he looks that we should set about it presently: and now that the destroying sword is in his hand, every man may perceive that delays are dangerous. Archimedes drew lines so long in the dust till his city was taken, and the soldiers broke in upon him and slew him. Many that have thoughts of repentance and returning to God, lose their precious souls by their sinful delays.

Fourthly, I may add to the former, in the last place, turning sincerely, entirely, and speedily. We may return hopefully; not doubting of mercy which is promised in Christ, to all that truly turn to God, at what time soever it is, Lam. iii. 40. Psal. cxix. 59. Deut. iv. 29, 30.

And to help yourselves in such a purpose of turning, let a right course be taken: For this end every man must search and try his ways, and so turn. When a man hath seen how he hath turned from God to sin, he must the contrary way return from sin to God. Thus David thought on his ways, and turned his feet unto God's testimonies. † As we go from God by pride, disobedience, following after things which are seen, and tasting the forbidden fruit, &c. so we must turn to him weeping, obeying, contemning things visible, and bridling the desire of the flesh, &c. which is to return the contrary way to that in which we have gone in the course of sin. Because we departed with joy, we must return with lamentation.

* *Corporis conversio si sola fuerit, nulla erit.*

† *A regione nostra superbiendo, inobediendo, visibilia sequendo, cibum vetitum gustando discessimus: sed ad eum necesse est flendo, visibilia contemnendo atque appetitum carnis refranando redeamus.*

1. And for further help, attendance must be given upon the word, which (as the prophet David saith, Psal. xix. 7.) doth convert the soul.

2. A faithful and powerful Ministry, in which the voice of the Lord may be heard, doth work such as have fallen from God to a willingness again to return; as Jer. iii. 22. 'Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings, (saith the voice of God in his word) and then they answer, 'Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.'

3. In the third place, another help is, adjoining ourselves unto such as do return, and forsaking the company of those that go still on in their trespasses. Psal. cxix. 63,—79. and verse 115. David is for their company that fear God; and that he may keep the commandments of his God, he doth abandon the society of evil doers *.

4. Finally, (if need be) the change of place, which sometimes is of necessity, that a man may be rid of evil company, and that he may be freed from such temptations as will still keep him in some one or other evil way.

5. Lastly, Because conversion and repentance are the work and gift of God; unto him we must seek by prayer and supplication through Christ, that he would please to work that in us which he requireth of us. Jer. xxxi. 18. Ephraim there doth thus pray to God, 'Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; thou art the Lord my God.' Thus let every one under this chastisement, being as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke, cry to God, 'Turn thou me, and I shall be turned, &c.' and all of us, as the Church, Lam. v. 21. 'Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord, and we shall be turned.' And when we pray, we must put forth our endeavours, and arm ourselves against opposition, and improve such means as serve unto this end. Some do commend unto men † converting this direction—first, to take off themselves from the

* Valet interdum pro salute animæ mutatio lociad congruum, est enim inde etiam corporaliter evelli, ubi quisquis illecebris deservivit. Isidor Hispal. de sum. bono. cap. 10.

† Vitia ante conversionem quasi pacem cum homine habent, quando autem expelluntur acriori virtute consurgunt. Isid.

action of sin, and then to deal with the appetite and cogitation. Howsoever they must look for strong opposition; for vices before conversion are, as it were, at peace with a man, but being opposed and expelled, they rise up with more strength and violence.

Now, in the last place, this doctrine may be applied for exhortation and special direction to our Parliament Worthies, upon whom it layeth a double charge, particularly for themselves, and generally for the whole kingdom. If impenitency and continuance in sin cause the continuance of anger, and doth pull down more and heavier strokes upon our nation, then it must be their endeavour to remove this cause of anger, that the anger may be diverted, and this heavy judgment removed from the kingdom, (Isaiah lvii. 12.)—This is the way for them to become the repairers of the breach, and restorers of paths to dwell in; for if men will return, anger will cease, and the quarrel will soon be at an end; but if the cause of wrath still continue, we cannot expect that the destroying hand should be drawn in, but that it should be stretched out still. Upon you, therefore, honorable and beloved, this use falleth with a double weight; the doctrine requireth for the removing of the strokes with which the land is smitten, and preventing of heavier ready to fall upon it, that you see that none of your own sins under smiting: that your not turning from them, do not cause the anger of God to continue; and that (being physicians of the state, such as are in places of power) you endeavour by all possible means, to cause the people to turn to him that smiteth them; that removing the cause wheresoever you find it, this miserable effect may cease. Turning yourselves from whatsoever may be found to be a part of the cause, and endeavouring as much as in you lieth to cause the whole kingdom to turn from their sins also, that anger may be appeased—and smiting stayed and cease.

It is not to be doubted, it hath been your desire and care, and is your endeavour to make others to return. You have used means to that end—and have therefore sent Ministers into many places where they were wanting, to call upon men to return, and to remove such as have been idle, unfaithful, and scandalous. And yet 'his anger is not turned away, &c.' The people, for all this, do not turn to

him that smiteth them. I should humbly present unto your wise considerations, whether something further be not to be done to cause the people to return. Solomon, Prov xxix. 19. telleth you, that a servant will not be corrected with words. Men of a servile disposition, will not be amended by so easy means as bare instructions, be they never so wholesome and good: they will not answer the expectation of such as shall bestow their pains upon them. And the Holy Ghost, Jude, verse 22, 23. sheweth, that men must be variously dealt with according to their various dispositions. 'And of some (saith he) have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire.' Compassion is to be used towards some, and severity towards others, that (if it be possible) they may be pulled out of the fire; men must be dealt with for the saving of their souls, as surgeons are wont to deal with their patients for the saving their lives; if lenitives and more gentle means will not serve, corrosives, cauterizings, and the like must be used. God himself doth take the rod into his hand, when the word is contemned; and if lighter strokes will not serve, he hath heavier blowes for those that be impenitent. That the people may be brought to return, instructions and corrections must be used; Magistrate and Minister, the Word and Sword must be joined. There are many grievous sins among us, which have provoked the wrath of God against the land, and from which the people should turn, that his anger may be turned away, and his destroying hand taken off from the nation. Many that have been complained of by others, that I have no time nor intention to name—I shall only represent some few, which are more common and obvious, and withal more impudent and scandalous; humbly intreating that some means, which seemeth best to your wisdoms, may be used to suppress them, and to cause the people, if it be possible, to turn from them:—as,

First, The great neglect of the duty of these days of humiliation, which many (especially in the country) do not only slight and disregard, but abuse and prophane—spending the day, or a great part of it, in ale-houses and taverns, or about their worldly employment, as if it were indifferent

to come or not to come to the public assemblies, to seek or to provoke the Lord of Hosts.

Secondly, The horrible profanation of the glorious, and dreadful Name of GOD, by execrations, blasphemies, and bloody oaths—a sin that doth exceedingly abound, and under which the land doth grievously mourn!

Thirdly, The sottish, and swinish sin of drunkenness, by which men and women make themselves like beasts rather than Christians; and yet in these times of smiting it doth so abound, as hardly can men walk the streets, but to their grief they shall see of both sex, reel and vomit in a brutish manner without control.

Fourthly, The hateful sin of pride, especially of women, against whom our prophet (Isa. iii. 16, 17, 18, &c.) hath spent a good part of a chapter: and elegantly set forth the levity and vanity of the women of his time, and withal how this sin did provoke God, and pull down such a judgment as the land is under; for he doth threaten war and declare that their men should fall by the sword, and their mighty men in the war, verse 25. Yet some among us, (as if they durst out-dare heaven itself) do come into the presence of an angry God, in the days of humiliation, with naked breasts, and such vain attire, as doth openly discover that lightness and wantonness which is shameful and unsufferable.

Fifthly, There are many other sins, such as Sabbath-breaking, oppression, &c. of which I thought to have spoke something, if the time would have given leave; but I shall only name one thing more, which might much further this work, and that is, that some course may be taken for the purging of the Magistracy—that, as scandalous Ministers, so ill Justices and scandalous Magistrates may be removed, and those that be zealous and pious put in their places: for there will be little hope (if sin be set up to correct vice, and they that turn from God themselves, shall stand in the places of those that should cause others to turn) that the work of reformation will ever go forward, the former or other sins be sup-

pressed, and the land purged of them. A faithful
 stracy, and a painful Ministry, may do much more to
 than either of them can do apart. I beseech you, *that*
 some course may be taken, such as to your wisdoms *it*
 seem best, to put life into laws and ordinances, that *it*
 may not be suffered to sleep, and wicked men to sin; *that*
 that they may be constrained to break off these sins which
 so highly provoke God, and so much hinder our peace. *It*
 is noted of king Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31, 32. that hav-
 ing made a covenant to walk before the Lord, and to keep
 his commandments, &c. he caused all that were present or
 were found in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it, *i. e.* (as
 some read and expound it) he constrained them by royal
 power and authority, &c. This is the way to remove the
 cause of our misery, and to save yourselves and the nation,
 at least, to discharge your own duty, to perform a most ac-
 ceptable service to your God; and therefore, in the words
 of David unto Solomon, (when he had shewed his care
 and preparation for the building the house of the Lord, and
 the work that was before him) let me make bold to exhort
 you to this duty, and sue to God for success: *Arise there-
 fore, and be doing, and the Lord be with you.* 1 Chron.
 xxii. 16.

FINIS.



